

Globalization and Fake News in Nigeria Democratic Polity: Trends and Challenges

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Abstract

The unprecedented upsurges on the trends and challenges of fake news in Nigeria since the adoption of a democratic polity in 1999 have become a worrisome phenomenon. It is a neologism that is paradoxically likened to an offspring of rumours, junk news, story or propaganda. With stupendous growth in globalization, its trend and challenges have percolated the entire gamut of human endeavours with delirious and debilitating effects on Nigerian populace and the nation socio-economic, religious and political development. Since globalization is a complex web of interconnectedness, it means human lives are increasingly shaped by events that occur, and decisions that are made at a great distance from us. Against this backdrop, Nigeria overwhelming chauvinism with democracy has ensconced strong assertiveness to technology and electronic media devices to concoct fake news. These are wired and accomplished through broadcast news, websites, facebook or social media under the pretext of globalization. Its challenges have culminated and escalate discord, hatred, animosity, war, socio-political turmoil, economic inequality and religious quagmire among plural ethnic societies of Nigeria. Besides, the long-run consequences have continued to evoke unwarranted killings, injuries, social stigma, exploitation and displacement of people among others. Prognostically, if fake news is not articulately managed and mitigated, it will throw the country into uncontrollable violence and disintegration. The paper, therefore recommended that appropriate censorship and control should be introduced; proactive legal and punitive measures should be meted out to infractor; mainstreaming of critical reading of propaganda and the evaluation sources; and lastly, the teaching of media literacy in institutions. More apposite, the paper is set out to examine the proliferating propensity of fake news, its origin, forms and transformation vis-à-vis through globalization in the contemporary democratic polity. The paper adopted the combination of the historical methodology for data collection and interpretation to validate the reliability of the study.

Keywords: *Globalization, Fake News, Democratic Polity, Trends, Challenges*

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Background to the Study

The transition to democratic governance in 1999 from prolonged military administration ushered into Nigeria pristine ideological behaviour and characters that are inimical to peaceful and harmonious co-existence of Nigeria plural societies. This is largely due to the multifarious nature of Nigeria ethnic groups and their distinctive ideological inclination toward issues. These inherent developments however spurred their implications in the struggle for the attainment of political appointment, leadership position and resource control in Nigeria by some clique of the ethnic group. However, their negative consequence continues to create serious dichotomies, prejudices and unprecedented damages arising from robust interaction with fake news via globalization. The phenomenon of fake news is neologistic and its heinous act has paradoxically likened to an offspring of rumours, junk news, story or propaganda as argues by Allcott and Gentzkow, (2017:211-236). It is apposite to recognise that the emergence of fake news in Nigeria cannot be separated from robust interactions with globalisation which democratic polity is one of the indices.

In the United States of America, the intensity of fake news is reported to have played a fundamental role in the 2016 general election. Its consequences have undermined the direction of President Donald Trump campaign and administration, leading to unbridled and unwarranted excoriation, (Jenni, 2016). This was achieved through effervescent global technology via the social media and networks that constitute, notably: facebook, webs, internet, twitter, Whatsapp and Instagram among others, (Roberts, 2017). In Nigeria, the challenges of fake news have stirred uncontrollable violence conflicts leading to killings, destruction of properties, redirection of national economic resources for conflict mitigation and management. Its negative pervasiveness has continued to re-orchestrate and chart a new course for rebuilding Nigeria reputations in the face of international comity of nations.

It should be noted that fake news cannot be construed independently of globalization. This is because globalization internalises countries of the world through interconnected electronic machines, (Mohammed, 2004:51-60) of which fake news is quintessential. More pertinently, the chauvinistic acknowledgement and adoption of globalization have foisted a social system and values that are not only foreign but antithetical to the socio-economic development of Nigeria, (Ibid, 2004:53). This informed the overwhelming embracement of fake news by its users as a strategy to incubate distortions and excruciations of opposing groups, political section or ethnic groups to obtain gains. Ogundiya (2008) contend that the unequal distribution of democratic dividends emerging from unequal representation and marginalisation affect political appointment among many others. For instance, the varied democratic campaign, electioneering exercises and dispensations in Nigeria from 1999 to 2019, illustrate heterogeneous ethnic groups wallowing in one form of fake news or junk news. This is meant to distort people and administrative ambience to dominate governance which has consequently disrupted existing relative peace in the country. For instance, the illicit hoax ensconced by some political gladiators in Nigeria was purported to condemn the political personality of

President, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari of been cloned, (Okogba, 2019). More so, a typical example that drew the attention of Nigerians and media during the electioneering campaigns in 2019 included the attribution of some nauseating statements to the famous world novelist- Professor Wole Soyinka. This development poised for the question, why fake news is adopted in pursuance of, or as a strategy to achieve socio-economic, political and religious benefits or vantages?

It is within this purview that this paper is compartmentalised into sections. The first deals with the general overview of the paper. The second section provides the conceptual reflection on globalization, fake news and democratic polity vis-à-vis their interplay in understanding the phenomenon under review. The third examines a glimpse on the evolution of fake news, while the fourth investigate the taxonomy and precipitating forces of fake news. The fifth explores the trends and challenges of fake news in Nigeria democratic polity, and lastly the concluding remarks.

Conceptual Reflections: Globalization, Fake News and Democratic Polity

The term globalization has no precise definition, but its historical evolution could be dated back to the emergence of slavery, capitalism and imperialism. Plethora of concepts have been advanced by the number of scholars, but however, extenuated; it means exploration and exploitation of human and material resources using the credulity of the conquered people. Mohammad cited in Odama and Aiyedun, (2004:51) the decades of the 1990s and 2000s have been aptly described as the era of globalization in which the world has become a global village. Rodney (1972:162) expresses globalization as imperialism- a capitalist expansion or the penetration of foreign capitalism on a world-wide scale from the late 19th century onward. Hence, Abdulrahman and Kura (2012:1) extol globalization as a complex web of relationships and interactions of a process of interdependence and mutual awareness among economic, political and social units and actors in the world. In the words of Nabudere (2003:3), globalization is a phenomenon that tends toward causing conflicts, war and social disintegration in almost all the countries of the world. According to Decker (2015), globalization has injected serious debilitating effects in the construction of new identities, reputation and the reinvention of old ones.

Aminu and Kabiru (2018: 273-276), exemplifies globalization in its ideological application as a systemic imposition of the universalism of western values, institutions and system over the traditional values of third world societies. Essentially, with Nigeria overbearing chauvinism and acknowledgement of democracy as an amenable polity, it has continued to inject a trajectory through which the presence of multinational companies is evident. In this connection, variegated natures of fake news are wired through global satellites and electronic social networks.

Democracy has no popular expression among people, particularly statesmen and political leaders who lay claims to democratic polity regardless of the type of government they are running. 'Democracy' is very ubiquitous in political any discourses, hence, it

attracted several explanations from different scholars in different perspectives. According to Falade (2014), the term 'democracy' is etymologically derived from two Greek words: "demos" which mean people and "Kratos" means to rule. In his classical definition, Abraham Lincoln defines democracy as "the government of the people by the people and for the people." Connecting from the above view, people are central to any democratic process. Without giving people the power and mandate to decide who will become their leader as well to hold their leaders responsible, democracy would be a mirage. Diamond, Linz, and Lipset (1989) explain democracy as a system of government that entails healthy competition between parties for an effective position of governance, devoid of violence for an all-encompassing level of political involvement. The selections of leaders are done through the conduct of periodic free and fair elections, fundamental human rights and political participation. However, Ajayi (1998) posits that democracy offers participatory opportunities for residents in choosing political aspirants through periodic elections of reliable representatives to govern and protect their interest.

Fake news or junk news or spoofs is a type of yellow journalism or propaganda that consists of deliberate disinformation or hoaxes spread via traditional print and broadcast news media or online social media (Elle, 2016). The false information is often caused by reporters paying sources for stories, an unethical practice called chequebook journalism. The news is often reverberating as misinformation in social media occasionally finds its way to the mainstream media, (Marju, 2017:25-41). Fake news is written and published usually with the intent to mislead to damage an agency, entity or person, and/or gain financially or politically, (Merriam-Webster, 2017). It is often used as a sensationalist, dishonest, or outright fabricated headlines to increase readership. Similarly, clickbait stories and headlines earn advertising revenue from this activity, (Elle, 2017). According to Kolawole (2017), "fake news is that art of concocting stories from one's bedroom because of the availability of a Smartphone with cheap data. It has become the biggest thing in community, town, State, etc. For example, the SAP riot of 1989 in Nigeria was precipitated and sparked off by fake news" as explicated by Kolawole, (2017).

Glimpse on Systemic Evolution of Fake News in Nigeria

The systemic evolution of fake news started in Europe and the Middle East during the medieval period. During the first BC, Octavian ran a campaign of misinformation against his rival, Marc Anthony, portraying him as a drunkard, a womanizer and a mere puppet of the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra VII. He published a document purporting to be Marc Anthony's will, which claimed that upon his death, wished to be entombed in the mausoleum of the Ptolemaic pharaohs. Although the document was reported to have been forged, it invoked outrage from the Roman populace, (Izabella, 2017). Consequently, Marc Anthony ultimately killed himself after his defeat in the Battle of Actium upon hearing false rumours propagated by Cleopatra herself claiming that she had committed suicide (Eve, 2017).

Also, the gradual influence of fake news on the rest of the world can never be overemphasised largely because of interconnectedness arising from global interaction. In

1475, a fake news story in Trent claimed that the Jewish community had murdered a two and a half years old Christian infant named Simonino, (Politico Magazine, 2017). The story resulted in all the Jews in the city being arrested and tortured, fifteen of them were burned at the stake. Pope Sixtus IV himself attempted to stamp out the story, but, during the period, it had already spread beyond anyone's control. Against the backdrop, the story was referred to as "blood libel, they claimed that Jews purposely killed Christian's children and used their blood for religious or ritual purpose, (Anti-Defamation League).

As far as Nigeria is a concern, the spread of fake news is compartmentalised into three distinct historical trajectories, viz: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. The phenomenon of fake news becomes more endemic and pervasive in Nigeria with the emergence of globalization, between the 1990s and 2000s, (Mohammed, 2004:51). Albeit, fake news in the pre-colonial time among the varied and separate ethnic groups in what later become Nigeria in 1914 was not much common, but this did not nullify its existence. Its pervasiveness on a large scale was insignificant in comparison with Europe, North America and the Middle East among others. According to Crowder, (1978) and Ogundiya and Baba, (2012: 284-289), prior to the emergence of the British colonial administration, Nigeria as a political entity was not in existence.

Historically, the territories which in the contemporary time make up of Nigeria existed as separate and distinct entities in the pre-colonial time. The heterogeneous entities enjoy a profound *intra* and inter-groups relations which led to viable and flourishing peace and harmonious relations, (Aminu and Ezra, 2019). Under the pre-colonial indigenous political system, the stint and trend of fake news were not much prevalent, but its traces and manifestation cannot be denied. This was because the proactive nature of autochthonous laws and conflict resolution process was very effective and efficient. A germane factor which inhibited widespread of fake news among the diverse people was lacked Western literacy and electronic media which conflated it prior to 19th century. However, the indigenous rulers attached some level of clandestine to frivolous news and flippant talks which thereby inhibited its pervasiveness through the punitive measure (Awal, 2019). By and large, the invention of printing press in the 15th century in Europe (Eve, 2017) and its subsequent spread to Africa in the 19th century through British occupation of Nigeria influenced the proliferation and porosity of fake news.

The British colonial subjugation of Nigeria in 1851 and its annexation in 1861 (Crowder, 1978) ushered in the new identity of social ideas and ideologies emanating from native forceful effervescent embracement of Western education culture and way of life (Decker, 2016). The implication is that the British imposed and fostered new cultural systems that were antithetical to what later became Nigeria on January 1st1914 during the amalgamation, (Nwaobi, 2004). However, the forceful amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates reinforced the development and spread of fake news in Nigeria. Aminu and Ezra (2018), asserts that emerging from the amalgamation are peoples with irreconcilable differences in the merger of about 400 ethnic groups. With this development, Nigeria became the most diverse and the most populous nation-state in

Africa, (Otite, 2000). The most prominent ethnic groups are Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, Igbo and Ijaw. The Hausa/Fulani have traditionally dominated in the North, Yoruba in the Southwest, Igbo in the East, and Ijaw in the Niger Delta. Each of these ethnic groups as opines by Ibrahim (2018) maintains symbolic coherence leading to complementary and conflictive relations. The rivalries and hostility among these ethnic groups culminate into the development of fake news part of what instigated the Nigerian civil war, ethno religious conflict, social instabilities and hostilities among many others in the 20th and 21st centuries, (Ibrahim, 2018). It could be emphasised that the amalgamation as part of the globalization agenda instigated variegated ethnic groups continuing manifestation of hatred, hostility and squabbles which were nurtured during the struggle for the decolonization of Nigeria.

In the colonial period, fake news and information were embroidered with a new dimension with the British colonial occupation of Nigeria. It becomes heightened with greater intensity to derogate and denigrate the colonized people, principally for the British colonizers to achieve political and economic goals. Instrumental to fake news during the British colonial enterprise was the establishment of the first transmission Radio station in Nigeria, specifically in the Western region in the 1930s, (Samuel, *et al* 2019). Since its establishment, the Nigeria decolonization struggles and agitations that started in the 1920s continues to flourish. The agitations were facilitated through the transmission of their hatred and venom against colonial domination and exploitation (Ibrahim, 2018). This development exposed Nigerian populace to the genre of information dissemination, education and entertainments and it's otherwise.

Accompanied concomitantly with nationalist activities was prevalence of hate speech and fake news. Its spontaneous occurrences spurred the sowing of the seeds of fake news for derision and excoriation to tarnish or reduce targeted person, group or group's personality as to achieve some gains. The emergence of globalization was aptly the culmination of the crestfallen of Nigeria socio-cultural status that significantly aggravated fake news in Nigeria during and after independent periods. Through numerous strategies and struggles, Nigeria achieved its political independence from the British colonial government on 1st October 1960, (Crowder, 1978).

In the later post-colonial period, the opening of the internet in Nigeria, particularly in the 1990s, the development was meant to allow Nigerians to have access to information. Over time, the internet has grown to unimaginable heights with tons of information coming in all time and allows the internet to be a host for plenty of unwanted, untruthful and misleading information that can be concocted by anyone. Fundamentally, in the 1990s, globalization as a form of universalization according to (Nwaobi, 2004) increased information dissemination and the spate of fake news. These are generated through social media, notably: facebook, internet, websites, Whatsapp, Instagram and Twitter among many others (Gentzkow, 2016: 211-236). It is worthy note that globalization constitute multiplicity of agents or actors that are instrumental or direct players in the process, which include the Trans-National Co-operations (TNCs), Trans-National

Finances (TNFs), World Bank, International Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO) and the media, (Mohammed, 2004). These global agents in consolidation with Nigeria democratic polity wielded considerable influence on fake news.

In the immediate post-colonial period, Nigeria as a multi-ethnic society experienced a series of military rules leading to the usurpation of power and continues nurturing of socio-political instability. This landmark development, according to Ogbu (2004:33) was the emergence of pristine parliamentary and democratic governments. This gave birth to the origin of political gladiators and numerous conflagrations in an attempt to consolidate Nigeria political gains as well as to mend its carcasses. It is incontrovertible that globalization is a construct orchestrated to debase Nigeria socio-economic, religion and political proclivity that was supplanted with modern jingoism as a result of unequal gains, (Ake, 1992). In this regards, the knitting of the world together in the 1990s by social media and satellites networks continue to forge ahead of the *propension* for divulging of nauseating statements such as; blood libel, hoaxes and fake news among many others.

However, by the beginning of the 21st century, the capacity to mislead people was proliferated by the widespread use of social media which make fake news more obvious. During the 2016 Donald Trump, Presidential campaign and election, he was reported to have been the first person to use the word- "Fake News" in his analysis. Due to its consequences, its usage became generally adopted for political gimmick during the democratic campaign, Robert (2017), portend that it has possessed the tendency to foment violence conflict in multi-plural society. This assertion is typical of Nigeria situation principally because of the historic amalgamation of distinct ethnic groups which aftermath has ensconced virile irreconcilable society. It is observed that during the 2019 democratic campaigns and general elections, some Nigerian political stakeholders, senators and political gladiators mainstream the use of fake news to achieve political aim and objectives.

Taxonomy of Fake News

To comprehend fake news, Claire (2017) classified it into the following:

1. Satire or parody: This is the type of fake news that has no intention to cause harm, but has the potential to fool people.
2. False connection: This is when headlines, visuals or captions don't support content.
3. Misleading content: This deal with the misleading of people through the use of information to frame an issue or an individual.
4. False content: This is when genuine content is shared with false contextual information
5. Impostor content: This is when genuine sources are impersonated with false, made-up sources.
6. Manipulated content: This is when information or imagery is manipulated to deceive with a doctored photo.
7. Fabricated content: This is a news content which is hundred per cent false, designed to deceive and do harm.

Precipitating Forces of Fake News

It is imperative to understand that what causes fake news is ubiquitously the same in Europe, North America and in the Middle East. But the condition leading to its causes differs in Nigeria with some slight perspective. This depends largely on the British colonial experiences injected, notably, political vestiges, ethnic dichotomies, economic malaise and socio-cultural milieu of Nigeria. The following are the salient precipitating forces of fake news in Nigeria:

One of the fundamental causes of fake news is Nigeria overbearing romanticism with globalization. This has foisted certain behaviours that are strange, inimical and antithetical to Afro-Nigeria cultural experiences. This was strengthened by the invention and adoption of information technology to execute governmental activities globally through unavoidable social and satellites networks, (Aminu and Kabiru, 2018:278). For global media outlets, the strategies to attract viewers to their websites are by publishing and disseminating a story with false contents which benefits advertisers and improves ratings. Between the 1990s and 2000s, the strategies were encouraged by the Nigeria government that mandated the teaching of computer and information communication technology in secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Mohammad (2004) points out that to effectively facilitate the usage of ICT, the internet system was invented and brazed to aid communication and information dissemination at a fastest and quickest speed.

Also, there is the personal idiosyncrasy of Nigeria leaders and the selected democratic and political leadership style. By this, nepotism and tribalism gains ascendancy and therefore constitute the bane of fake news. For instance, Ogbu (2004:35) expressed that different ethnic groups of the country have consistently complained about the allocation of injustices in the appointment of government functionaries, distribution of power and resources among the six geo-political zones as well as leadership succession at the national level.

Again, the hostile and dictatorial democratic government and the civil actors is another germane factor. This has also been implicated in engendering and propagating of fake news, particularly during democratic elections (Ugwuanyi, 2017). In the words of Ogbu (2004:35), the Nigeria politicians are their enemy and adversary. He reiterates that their greedy, inefficiency and gross mismanagement of the country's scarce resources through power provided the alibi for fake news to creep in. It has been observed that ministers, governors and highly placed politician (Senators and House of Representatives) wallows in conspicuous consumption, while the masses languishing in abject poverty. Such an intolerable situation prompted the spread and nurturing of fake news as the only avenue and genre to achieve desirable objectives as well as to sabotage government, individual and groups efforts.

Besides, the inordinate ambition and quests at all possible by media and internet operators and perpetrators of fake news to generate revenue or funds are the additional causative factor for its existence and perpetuity. For instance, Samuel *et al* (2019: 96) avers

that Jestin Coler, the former Chief Executive Officer of the fake media conglomerate of *Disinfomedia*, said that his company employed 20 to 25 writers at a time and made \$10,000 to \$30,000 monthly from advertisements. This is not far from what is obtainable among Nigerians social media outlets and internet operators orchestrated through the articulate and organised scam.

Equally ostensible to the cause of fake news is the poor regulation of the internet due to the exploitative nature through the globalization in the quest to make an excessive profit. Connecting from the above, Nabudere (2000) explains that since globalization is a complex web of interconnectedness, it means human lives are increasingly shaped by events that occur, and the decisions that are made at a great distance from us. As fake news becomes rampant and porous via the internet, it poses difficulties for some people to find truthful information. In this perspective, fake news becomes a worldwide phenomenon spread through the use of websites to gain credibility and specialize in creating attention-grabbing news that often impersonates well-known news sources, (Samuel *et al*, 2019:96). The lack of vigorous socio-political education and poor enlightenment by the government to acquaint the civil society with the intricacies of democracy could also be attributed to precipitating forces of fake news in Nigeria.

Globalization Trends and the Challenges of Fake News in Nigeria Democratic Polity

The quintessential of this section is the examination of the globalization trend and the challenges of fake news in Nigeria democratic polity. In the view of Nkrumah (1945), globalization has impacted more negatively on the social system and political institutions nurtured over the period of colonialism and neo-colonialism. It is sufficing to say that the British colonial experiences and enterprise in Nigeria has been responsible for the pervasiveness of fake news, hoaxes and blood libel and its endemic challenges on social, economic, religious and socio-political instability. The challenges of fake news or junk news on Nigeria democratic polity are very debilitating. It exacerbates and disrupts the relative peace and harmony enjoys by multifarious ethnic societies. Perhaps, fake news, junks news or hoaxes vis-a-vis globalization occupation on third world countries, according to Mohammed (2004:33) have foisted on Nigeria a social system and values that are not only foreign but antithetical to the socio-political development of the country.

More significantly, another challenge of fake news is its nature of engendering violence conflicts in Nigeria corporate existence. Fake news is very heinous; it creates different stereotyping that result in extirpation of squabbles, chaos and violent conflicts among others. Through its prevalence, people are misinformed, dis-informed and mal-formed. It is important to note that, the systemic spread nature of fake news in Nigeria as a phenomenon is not restricted to the social media. For instance, on 5th July 2018, the front-page headline of the Nigeria national newspaper was: *Court orders National Assembly to begin impeachment of Buhari*. The inherent problem with the caption and news item is fake news according to the certified true copy of the order issued, the Presiding Judge of the Federal High Court in Oshogbo ordered and I quote:

The applicants are hereby granted leave to issue and bring an Application for the order of Mandamus to compel 1st to 3rd Respondents to start impeachment proceedings against the 4th Respondent, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (National Newspaper, 2018).

Judging from the above quotation, it is discernible that court order was manipulated to read that the court has mandated the National Assembly to commence impeachment proceedings against the President. In another dimension, in 2017, a piece of fake news or report circulated on the social media claimed that five students of the College of Education, Gidan Waya were ambushed and killed by Fulani herdsmen in Southern Kaduna. That report turned out to be false. In response from another source, it claimed that “no student was killed (Samuel, 2018).

In another perspective, the excessiveness of fake news assertions of uncensored news aggravated the herdsmen and farmer's pugnacity in Nigeria. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported that fake news circulating in social media fuels the herdsmen and farmers' conflict in Nigeria. In the report by a media organization, it stated that fake video pictures circulating on social media users are falsely claiming that inter-communal violence is inflaming, and have already created high tensions in Nigeria” (Adekunle, 2018 in Samuel, 2019). The international media outfit, specifically referred to repellent images circulating in the social media which the originators purportedly claimed was from recent violence in Jos, Plateau State (Okogba, 2019). In some quarter, the gruesome image of women faces down in a pool of blood with a gaping shoulder wound is purported to be from the recent attacks. This information has hundreds of re-tweets on Twitter, but it first appeared on the internet in 2011 in a story about domestic violence in Nigeria. Another image appears to show half a dozen people that were killed in the attacks. On closer inspection, it becomes obvious that the picture was not taken in Nigeria, and it was the scene that took place in the 2015 traffic accident in the Dominican Republic (Adekunle, 2018).

More apposite, the challenges of fake news have created serious dichotomies among heterogeneous Nigeria ethnic groups with each group perceiving and brandishing each other as either foes or friends. For example, major Nigerian news outlets ran a story claiming that Mal. Danladi Ciroma, a leader of the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association, reported that the attacks in Plateau were revenge for the loss of 300 cows. “Since these cows could not be found; no-one should expect peace in the areas.” During the course of the investigation, Mal. Danladi Ciroma refuted the report and the media organization reportedly tendered an apology for the inadequacies of the fake news transmitted (Fieldwork, 2019). Judging from the above, it is adequate to assert that fake news in most times instigates confusion, tension and suicide depending on the person or institution on the other end. In consequence, Gentzkow (2017:211-236) extols that fake news undermines serious media coverage and makes it more difficult for journalists to cover significant news stories.

Furthermore, the socio-political challenges of fake news brought about a serious decline in confidence in many traditional media and expert knowledge. Evgeny (2017) opines that fake news has created fertile ground for alternative and often obscure sources of information to appear as authoritative and credible. This ultimately subjects the users to confuse about the basic fact of any phenomenon that transpires (Holcomb, 2016:2016). For example, in 2018, over the media, a serving Senator, Dino Melaye concocted a piece of fake news that the formal and retired Inspector General of police planted a gun in his car as an attempt to ruin his political career as well as to paved ways for other aspiring candidates in the scene of politics. Invariably, when properly investigated, it was a piece of fake news orchestrated to equally distort the professional image of the said police boss.

Normatively, the challenges of fake news help to correct some imbalances in the polity and individual life. But it has stirred-up altercation as fabrication of information by some disgruntle political elements are created to achieve a political end. Major fake news that dominated Nigeria's media space was the rumoured of the death of President Muhammadu Buhari. This was shortly after he began a health leave to the United Kingdom on January 19th, 2017 (Ugwanyi, 2017 and Kperogi, 2017). As asserted by Ugwanyi (2017).

....so audacious were the masterminds that they cloned Metro newspaper of the UK or Huffington Post of US announcing in the spoofs that President Buhari died in London. While "Metro" reported the "death" of the Nigerian president, "Huffington Post" alleged that he was caught "committing suicide." The same picture of Buhari was used on both stories which had the same lines repeated in them. However, these contradictions did not stop the spoofs from sending the internet into overdrive in Nigeria, as the rumoured death of Buhari was lapped up by some blogs and the social media, (Ugwanyi, 2017).

Appraising from the foregoing quotation, it is also discernible to understand that fake news is more heinous, dangerous and insidious. It adaptability could not unite the plural ethnic groups of Nigeria. More also, the scourge of fake news as portends by some political coteries among which include Nnamdi Kanu of Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and others claimed that the President of Nigeria has been cloned and using Jibril of Sudan as a surrogate. And he has been ruling the country since the demised of the President Buhari.

Often relevant to the challenges of fake news was the wrong attribution to Professor Wole Soyinka. He was quoted to have castigated the President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's wife of Nigeria for misconduct behaviour of embezzlement as well the most famous uneducated being of the most populous African black race in the world. In the face of this, little wonder, Nigeria's Minister of Information and Culture, Mr Lai Mohammed, in February 2017 asserted that, fake news poses more danger to the country than insurgency and militancy, (Ugwanyi, 2017). He added that, proactive action requires to be taken to avert the disintegration of Nigeria.

On the economic perspective, the challenges of fake news have been problematic in Nigeria because of the influence of globalization that has remained a Siamese in the universalization of information for a pecuniary motive. Through globalization links, Mohammed (2004) avows that Nigeria has been subjected to a mere appendage of World history and capitalist exploitation which Yandaki (1995) termed as 'Westoxicfication of ideology.' This is more manifested in the Nigeria integration into capitalistic web and economic system (Onimode, 1983 and Bello, 2011) where social media have outsized and inhibit democratic polity to work effectively for its population. Andrew (2016) avers that the evolving nature of online business models encourages the production of information that is click-worthy independent of its accuracy because of the attempt to gain credibility on the part of the media. It also discouraged foreign investors which delirious effects also impinged on the economic growth and development of Nigeria.

Religiously, the challenges of fake news, blood libel and hoaxes have instigated some conflicts in Nigeria. Through fake news, quite a number of people, communities and States in Nigeria have pitted against themselves. The phenomenon of fake news via globalization marred the entire gamut of human endeavours by using religion to gain political ascendancy and aspiring self-aggrandizement. There was also the fake report that the armed forces of Nigeria armed the Fulani herdsmen and instigate them to carry out attacks. All this news is unfounded, but fake news can set one religion or group against the other. For instance, the Sharia debacle in Gusau the capital of Zamfara State and extended to Kaduna and Kano States among others was misconstrued to might have been ignited from fake news and lacked religious tolerance, (Ishaku, 2019). Also, the fake news surrounding the Islam as a monolithic religion of northern Nigeria was perceived as a den or strategies to exterminate human life as well as amputation as a punitive measure for infractor (Aminu, 2018).

As a result of misinformation, Aminu and Salaudeen (2019) express that individual, families and the nation stand at the cross-road of desperation. Isiaka (2018) opines that the increasing propensity of conflicts in Nigeria has led to the upsurge of poverty-ridden, breakdown of families on daily bases, while, crimes and drug addiction have also become normative in Zamfara, Kaduna and the Nassarawa States among others as observed. In recent time, the Shiite conflagrations in 2018 and 2019 respectively have also led to the decimation of persons as a result of fake news that was reported. Fundamentally, it instigated killings among Nigeria security agents, innocent victims and some Shi'ites when the members reinforced attacked on Nigeria army in Abuja, (Daily Trust, July 2019).

Concluding and Recommendation

The paper examined the unprecedented upsurge on the trends and challenges of fake news in Nigeria since the adoption of a democratic polity in 1999. In addition, it also examined a cursory examination of fake news in the medieval period towards, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. Fake news is perceived as a neologistic phenomenon that is paradoxically likened to an offspring of rumours, junk news, story or propaganda. Through globalization, it has become a worrisome phenomenon

undermining the peaceful co-existence of the plural ethnic Nigeria societies. The stupendous growth in globalization trends and the challenges vis-à-vis fake news in Nigeria have percolated the entire gamut of human endeavours with delirious challenges on socio-economic, religious and political development. It is important to note that the circulation of false information or fake news has started to have a toll on some perceived credibility of popular online newspapers. This is because of the ineffectiveness of government institutionalised policy and legal backing that would mandate the censorship of news transmission for authenticity and originality among others.

It is worthy of note that Nigeria overwhelming chauvinism, with the adoption of the democratic polity as part of the indices of globalization ensconced strong inclination to technology and electronic media devices. Consequently, the concoction of fake news, have continued to escalate discord, hatred, animosity, war, socio-political turmoil, economic inequality and religious quagmire among others in Nigeria plural societies. However, the paper recommends that appropriate censorship and control should be introduced; proactive legal and punitive measures should be meted out to infractor; mainstreaming of critical reading of propaganda and evaluation of its sources. Lastly, the teaching of media literacy in institutions should be integrated into the contemporary curriculum.

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